

House Republican Press Release

May 11, 2005
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Rep. Piscopo Offers Measures to Reform Prevailing Wage Mandate



State Representative John Piscopo, R-76th District offered two measures Tuesday that would have made significant changes in Connecticut's prevailing wage law that could have saved the state and its towns and cities millions of dollars over the years on government construction projects.

Both of Representative Piscopo's proposals were amendments to a prevailing wage bill (Senate Bill 847) that was being considered by the state House of Representatives. The amendments were defeated on party line votes, with most of the majority Democrats voting to reject them and most Republican legislators supporting the measures.

One of the amendments would have increased the number of state and local construction projects performed by contractors and subcontractors where the requirement to pay workers prevailing (union scale) wages does not apply. The other proposal would have exempted school construction projects from the prevailing wage mandate.

State statutes currently require workers on state and local public works projects to be paid at the prevailing wage rate if the total cost of a project is more than \$400,000 or more than \$100,000 if the work involves remodeling, refinishing, refurbishing, rehabilitation, alteration or repair of any state- or town-owned structure. Representative Piscopo's amendment would have increased those thresholds to \$1,500,000 and \$500,000 respectively.

"Connecticut has among the most unrealistic prevailing wage thresholds for public works projects in the country - and they have not been adjusted since 1991," Representative Piscopo said. "Inflation and the cost of construction materials have significantly increased the cost of public works projects since then. Raising the prevailing wage thresholds to \$1,500,000 and \$500,000 would have made smaller public works construction and renovation projects more affordable for Connecticut's municipalities and local property taxpayers."

"There are hundreds of public works and school construction projects that cost less than \$1,500,000 as well as renovation projects amounting to less than \$500,000," Rep. Piscopo said. "Raising the prevailing wage thresholds would enable our towns to tackle long-overdue projects that have been postponed because of cost considerations."

Connecticut's prevailing wage law should have been reformed years ago. Adjusting the thresholds would have generated more jobs for construction workers and enabled more small contractors who cannot afford to pay prevailing wages to compete on an even playing field for public works projects."